



Doing Chemical Sexualities, Becoming a Jago: Masculinities, Personhood, and Precarity in West Papua

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Summary

This dissertation frames the practices of penis and sexual enhancement as a lens through which to understand evolving masculinities in West Papua. Men in West Papua today encounter myriad drugs, foods, drinks, cosmetics, and other substances to enhance their bodies and sexual performance. As Hardon et al. (2013) use the term 'chemical sexualities' to describe the phenomenon of young people in Indonesia turning to pharmaceuticals and cosmetics to feel attractive and sexually confident, to increase their sexual stamina, and to transform their bodies, in this dissertation, I define chemical sexualities as the chemical practices of young men to manage their bodies and sexual performance, which in turn constitute gendered personhood.

The question of how the practices of chemical sexuality constitute a particular kind of masculinity is the focus of this thesis. There are three main questions to answer: How is a particular kind of masculinity constituted by the practices of chemical sexuality? How do chemical practices enable young men to perform their bodies in and through relations with others? And as this research took place in West Papua that has a long history of military oppression, I also seek to answer: To what extent are the notions and performances of masculinity shaped by contexts of precarity?

The practices of penis and sexual enhancement in West Papua, embedded in the history of male initiation and beliefs about gender and sexuality, are merging with new technologies, while West Papua's rapidly changing society and gender norms are opening new opportunities to experiment with alternative forms of sexual relations, pleasures, and products. Examining the chemical practices of young men not only sheds light on their constructions of sexuality and masculinity, but also points to the broader social forces—and in particular, the environments of precarity—that shape their practices. The context of precarity in West Papua, I suggest, fuels young men's practices of chemical sexuality and their performances of masculinity.

Drawing upon Strathern's concept of gendered personhood (1988), this dissertation argues that a specific form of masculinity emerges from the practices of chemical sexuality among young men in West Papua, a phenomenon I term *jago masculinity*. *Jago* is a form of relational gendered personhood, constituted through relations with other persons, with heterosexuality, with chemical sexualities, and with precarious places.

The concept of *jago* - literally means a fighting cock - has a trajectory in Indonesian history of masculinity to understand the relations between acts of violence, masculinity, and power. In West Papua, many young men when explaining their practices of chemical sexualities used the term to refer to the masculinity they aspired to: to be a virile man, whose penis and sexual prowess are a champion among peers, capable of dominating women sexually.

The context of precarity in West Papua is largely due to the military and structural violence of the Indonesian state reproducing multiple forms of violence in everyday life. At the same time, the rapid transformations have created precarious circumstances too as they changed traditional institutions, local power structures, gender norms and relations, and interpersonal and intimate relations. Amidst these rapid changes and the enduring structural violence, *jago* masculinities emerge linked to these precarious circumstances. *Jago* masculinity is a precarious kind of masculinity constructed through the practices of chemical sexuality within wider—precarious and violent—contexts of society, economy, history and politics.